

LOUISIANA SHRIMP HARVESTERS ADVISORY PANEL

MINUTES

October 26, 2009

DRAFT

LOUISIANA ROOM
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES
2000 QUAIL DRIVE
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

AGENDA – AMENDED

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Sept. 21, 2009 Minutes
- IV. Approval of Agenda
- V. Presentation - Shrimp Industry Trends, Dr. Jack Isaacs
- VI. Informal Discussion with Heather Finley regarding Coastal Restoration
- VII. Status Report on the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force
- VIII. Discussion of Task Force Actions
- IX. New Business/Agenda Items
- X. Set Next Meeting Date

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

THE LOUISIANA SHRIMP HARVESTER ADVISORY PANEL

Monday, October 26, 2009, 9:30 AM

Martin Bourgeois, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, facilitating.

Mr. Bourgeois called the meeting to order and welcomed all to the 2nd meeting of the Louisiana Shrimp Harvester Advisory Panel.

The Louisiana Shrimp Harvester Advisory Panel Members present:

Nicholas Alfonso
Ronnie Anderson
George Barisich
Acy Cooper
Tommy Cheramie
A.J. Fabre
Pete Gerica
Clint Guidry
Lance Nacio

Roll was called, Jerome Jones, Scott St. Pierre, Timmy Truong, and Bryan Crawford absent.

Lance Nacio arrived shortly into the meeting.

Clint Guidry made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting which was held on September 21, 2009. Motion was seconded by George Barisich. Motion carried unanimously.

Ronnie Anderson commented that the minutes are not reflecting exactly what is being said at the meetings. He said that Mr. Bourgeois explained that it's a summary draft, but some comments are left out.

Mr. Bourgeois said that it is difficult to provide a full transcript of meeting minutes. He said in addition to the meeting minutes a live audio stream is provided for all minutes and that those interested in hearing all comments from the meetings can listen to this audio on the LDWF website. These are also archived on the LDWF website.

Mr. Guidry said the minutes are being sent out and that all panel members need to review the minutes and if they have any proposed changes that they bring them forth at the meetings in order to amend the minutes to include these changes.

Mr. Anderson stated that at the last meeting Pete Gerica was saying that they are testing in 1 part per billion and that he followed with a comment saying that it is zero tolerance in the United States. He said his comment was in the minutes, but Mr. Gerica's comment was left out. He said that anyone who is reading the minutes may find the minutes misleading because of the missing comments.

George Barisich suggested to Mr. Bourgeois that we let more fishermen know that they can view these minutes and other information from the meetings.

Mr. Bourgeois said that LDWF has put out a press release to inform the public about the availability of this information and stated that the department will get with LSU Sea Grant to include the information in their publication.

Mr. Guidry made a motion to amend the agenda to include a presentation by Dr. Jack Isaacs on shrimp industry trends and an informal discussion with Heather Finley. Motion seconded by Acy Cooper. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Guidry to accept agenda as amended. Motion was seconded by Pete Gerica. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bourgeois then welcomed Dr. Jack Isaacs with the LDWF Socioeconomic Research and Development Section to give a presentation on current trends in the shrimp industry.

Dr. Isaacs pointed out:

- Current decline in the value per pound of Louisiana shrimp.
- Roughly a 50% decline in the number of shrimpers.
- 17 processors in Louisiana according to NMFS survey.
- Louisiana second in processing volume.
- 1.2 billion pounds in U.S. shrimp imports.

- Three major importers: Thailand, Indonesia, and Ecuador accounting for 60% of imports in 2008.
- Imports enter predominately along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.
- Drop in price per pound on imports.
- Reviewed notes on European imports.

*The full presentation by Dr. Isaacs can be found on the LDWF website.

Several of the advisory panel members asked Dr. Isaacs questions for clarification throughout the presentation. Ronnie Anderson asked why domestic shrimp prices have dropped \$1.00/lb in the last month on the New York price sheets. Pete Gerica stated that overuse of tripoly was a problem.

Heather Finley, LDWF, spoke as a request by Randy Pausina to provide answers to any questions or concerns of the Advisory Panel relative to the planning for the Davis Pond and Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion projects.

Mr. Guidry said that they are having problems in Zone 2 with the large amount of river water that's being pumped into the estuary. He asked for information on how shrimpers can participate in the planning of these diversion projects and other coastal restoration projects such as weirs, which have shown to have a negative effect on the oysters and shrimp in the area. He asked for some representation on the group that controls these structures. He said the shrimp industry would like to have a voice in developing a system that would provide a pulsing or cycling of the water outputs during the peak of the seafood harvesting seasons and production periods. He said they have recently seen a big drop in brown shrimp size and production during recent periods when there was a high discharge rate of river water.

Ms. Finley said that both the Davis Pond and Caernarvon Advisory Panels have a slot for shrimper representation. She mentioned that Davis Pond Advisory Panel has two slots for shrimp harvesters; one representing the upper and the other the lower basin. Levi Brunet is the representative for the Lower-Basin and Gene Adams, representative for the upper-basin. She said the Caernarvon Panel has a slot for a representative from the shrimp industry, but currently there's no one in that position.

Mr. Barisich said that the shrimpers had appointed several shrimpers, but those that volunteered to serve on the board never attended the meetings as their recommendations were ignored.

Ms. Finley stated that Wednesday there are working group meetings for both projects at the OCPD offices at UNO.

Nicholas Alfonso stated that to be a member on the board he has to be a part of the St. Bernard Parish Government. He said he should be appointed Wednesday on the Parish Coastal Zone Advisory Committee Board and then later on the Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion Board. He said that there is only one meeting per year.

Ms. Finley said that there is current discussion of increasing public participation in the meetings. She said the Governor has a commission on Coastal Protection and Restoration, oyster and menhaden have a representative, the shrimpers can pursue representation. She said they pass recommendations that go up through the governor's office.

Mr. Fabre stated that there is data in Calcasieu that shows the problems with weirs and that this information needs to be presented to those that don't know about it.

Ms. Finley stated that Karen Foote can provide him with the data.

Mr. Guidry said he attended a seminar by Denise Reed, a coastal scientist from LUMCON, and stated that she didn't attribute the building of wetlands to these projects. He said we need to think about whether we are going to sacrifice the shrimp industry with the hope of these projects being successful.

Ms. Finley said the United States Army Corp of Engineers under money from a bill in the Water Resources Development Act has been talking about the possibility of modifying the operating authority of the Davis Pond Structure. She mentioned that there are projects currently in the planning stage that would change the authorization from Congress to no longer regulate discharge rates in order to maintain certain salinity, but to use them as coastal restoration tools.

Motion was made by Mr. Fabre to recommend to the Shrimp Task Force for support in naming a shrimp harvester to be a representative on the Davis Pond and Caernarvon Advisory Committees and to request the Task Force to support legislation adding a shrimp harvester to the Governors Coastal Protection and Restoration Advisory Committee. Motion seconded by Mr. Geric. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bourgeois continued the meeting with a status report on the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force which has met four times. He said the recommendations from both the advisory panels have been moved into a report that has been brought forth to the Task Force for approval at their meeting later in the afternoon. He said LDWF has prioritized the actions of the advisory panels and has categorized them into groups that will either need agency, state, or federal action.

Mr. Bourgeois allowed Mr. Guidry to give an update from the Task Force meetings.

Mr. Guidry said that all of the recommendations and motions the Harvester Advisory Panel brought forth have been considered. He stated that several committees were formed to look at each action. He said that there are federal items that required letters that are being drafted and once approved the letters will be sent to the Gulf Coast delegation in Washington.

Mr. Guidry said that the motion that was made to move the Shrimp Industry under the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry has been let go. After speaking with the Commissioner it was determined that the funding sources for the industry fall under the LDWF and the industry will remain with the LDWF. However he did state that LDAF will assist the industry with the marketing and inspections with whatever they can legally do in conjunction with the Secretary of LDWF. He concluded in saying that a lot of work will be put into developing a marketing and branding program and mentioned that most of these actions that the Panel has developed will require legislation and funding.

Mr. Bourgeois read through a summary of all the recommendations developed between both Advisory Panels and the Task Force. [See Attached.]

Mr. Fabre made the comment that the processors received \$80 million, but are still claiming disaster money. He said they want to work with the shrimpers and have shown signs of cooperation.

Mr. Fabre said that something needs to be changed in order to properly allocate disaster funds to the correct individuals. He said that he didn't get relief money from his boat because the captain of his boat signed the trip tickets.

Mr. Bourgeois stated that modifications of the trip ticket forms are being done to capture vessel registration number, in addition to the vessel license number, in order to better allocate funds properly.

Mr. Bourgeois continued reading through the recommendations.

Mr. Guidry commented on the action that would allocate shrimp share of unspent 3rd Supplemental Funds to domestic shrimp promotion and marketing, he stated that he is not sure if that's the best method to use the funds, but some money will be needed to develop the branding program.

Mr. Barisich made a motion to recommend to the Task Force that any remaining fisheries disaster funds be utilized for disaster assistance payments to qualified participants, with special attention to individuals that failed to qualify for previous programs. Motion was seconded by Mr. Fabre. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gerica, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Alfonso, and Mr. Guidry discussed the proper wording and direction of the motion.

Mr. John Roussel commented that Katrina money allocation was based on pre-storm information, while Gustav/Ike funds used the post Katrina time period in order to avoid giving money to people that left the fishery.

Mr. Roussel and Mr. Fabre decided to further discuss the structure of the relief programs after the meeting.

Mr. Bourgeois continued reviewing the actions and panel recommendations.

Mr. Fabre made a motion to request the Task Force to identify funding sources in support of renewing the anti-dumping petition for Louisiana shrimpers and payback money that shrimp organizations have already paid to protect Louisiana Shrimpers. Motion seconded by Mr. Cooper. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Alfonso asked for clarification on the reason for the \$15 fee that was previously charged to shrimp harvesters and the dealer fee.

Mr. Fabre stated that the fee was legislated to get money to file the anti-dumping petition, which was supposed to work through Southern Shrimp Association. He said this issue is currently under testimony in court. He said they failed to protect the Louisiana shrimpers, while SSA instead of settling the \$12 million and giving it to the shrimpers, refused to settle.

Mr. Barisich said that he supported, along with SSA, the development of new legislation where everyone in the shrimp industry put forth a small fee in order to have the money to fight anti-dumping.

Mr. Guidry said it was done through the Louisiana Wild Caught Shrimp Trade Action.

Mr. Fabre said that if before February we don't have a funding source we can't fight the anti-dumping.

Motion was made by Mr. Barisich to recommend the Shrimp Task Force to request our Louisiana federal delegation to enact federal legislation to develop a subsidy program for domestic shrimp producers. Motion seconded by Mr. Fabre. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Guidry stated that he was contacted by Mr. Eddie Hayes, whom requested joint communication on all points agreed on between the Processor and Harvester Advisory Panels. He brought it forth to the Harvester Panel to see what level of communication they want to become involved with the Processors.

Mr. Gerica asked Mr. Guidry if this is for action items.

Mr. Guidry stated that yes it is the action items. He stated that Mr. Hayes is a lawyer for the processors, not their representative. He asked the Panel if they would like to go through the Processors Advisory Panel representative, Danny Babin, with all communications.

The Panel members discussed the issue and decided that keeping communications through Mr. Babin is in the best interest of the group.

Mr. Cooper stated that last meeting they talked about the 40% of processors that do imports and the issues of reboxing. He said that in any certified product plan we come up with a Louisiana box there should be no imported shrimp put in those boxes.

Mr. Guidry and Mr. Bourgeois stated that these problems are currently being addressed.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there are any ideas on what the Panel would like to see discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Cooper said that LDWF can work on giving shrimpers something to keep them in business during the wintertime to provide some income, because no industry can work six months out the year and survive.

The Panel decided to set the next meeting date as needed.

Mark Schexnayder, LSU AgCenter, referred to the Select Shrimp Council Report-1998 and the Industry Review Panel II Report-1999 and said that he plans on discussing shrimp management today at the Task Force meeting.

Mr. Anderson stated that he read through them and that he is still amazed that one report was from 1999 we are still talking about doing a Louisiana shrimp promotion program 10 years later and haven't accomplished it.

Mr. Cooper motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Fabre. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:06 PM.